Swami Turiyananda (an enlightened disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a Gurubhai/brother-disciple of Swami Vivekananda)

1. Continence is the most important practice in spiritual life. One who practices chastity easily attains devotion and knowledge. Lust is born in the mind. One who is freed from passions transcends this world.

2. DISCIPLE: How can we get rid of anger, jealousy, and other passions?" SWAMI TURIYANANDA: "Just analyze yourselves—why should you be angry or jealous? Who are you to punish another? Learn to punish yourselves. But never say that you have conquered lust and other passions. If you do, they will be aroused. Pray to God (or Guru) that they may remain dormant.

3. July 2, 1915. SWAMI TURIYANANDA: "Eating, sleeping, fear, copulation—these are the common characteristics of man and beast. We differ from the beasts in that we can discriminate between right and wrong. If one lives on a low plane of consciousness, one finds pleasure in the senses. With spiritual growth, one experiences happiness in subtler things. Then the person no longer finds enjoyment in the gross. Most people live the lives of beasts—drinking, hunting, running after a mate. If one cannot rise to a higher plane of consciousness, human birth is wasted. Meditate! Meditate! Be absorbed in His consciousness!

4. There is the ocean of infinite existence, infinite consciousness, and infinite bliss, seemingly divided by the stick of an ego which lies upon it. This ego is the first-begotten son of desire. Our cravings alone keep us separated from God. Sometime or other we must be freed from them. Root out all desires and call on Him! If He wills that the body should die, let it die while chanting His name! By worldly standards a man may be great. But he too in some life or other will have to renounce everything for God.

5. "Troubles exist as long as we live in the domain of thought. There is no peace until we transcend thought itself. When one kills the mind, the senses come under control. What does it mean to kill the mind? It is to detach it from sense objects. The enlightened person has their senses under perfect control. 'The tortoise can draw in his legs: the seer can draw in his senses. I call him illumined.'" The Swami closed his fist to illustrate how the enlightened soul draws in the senses.

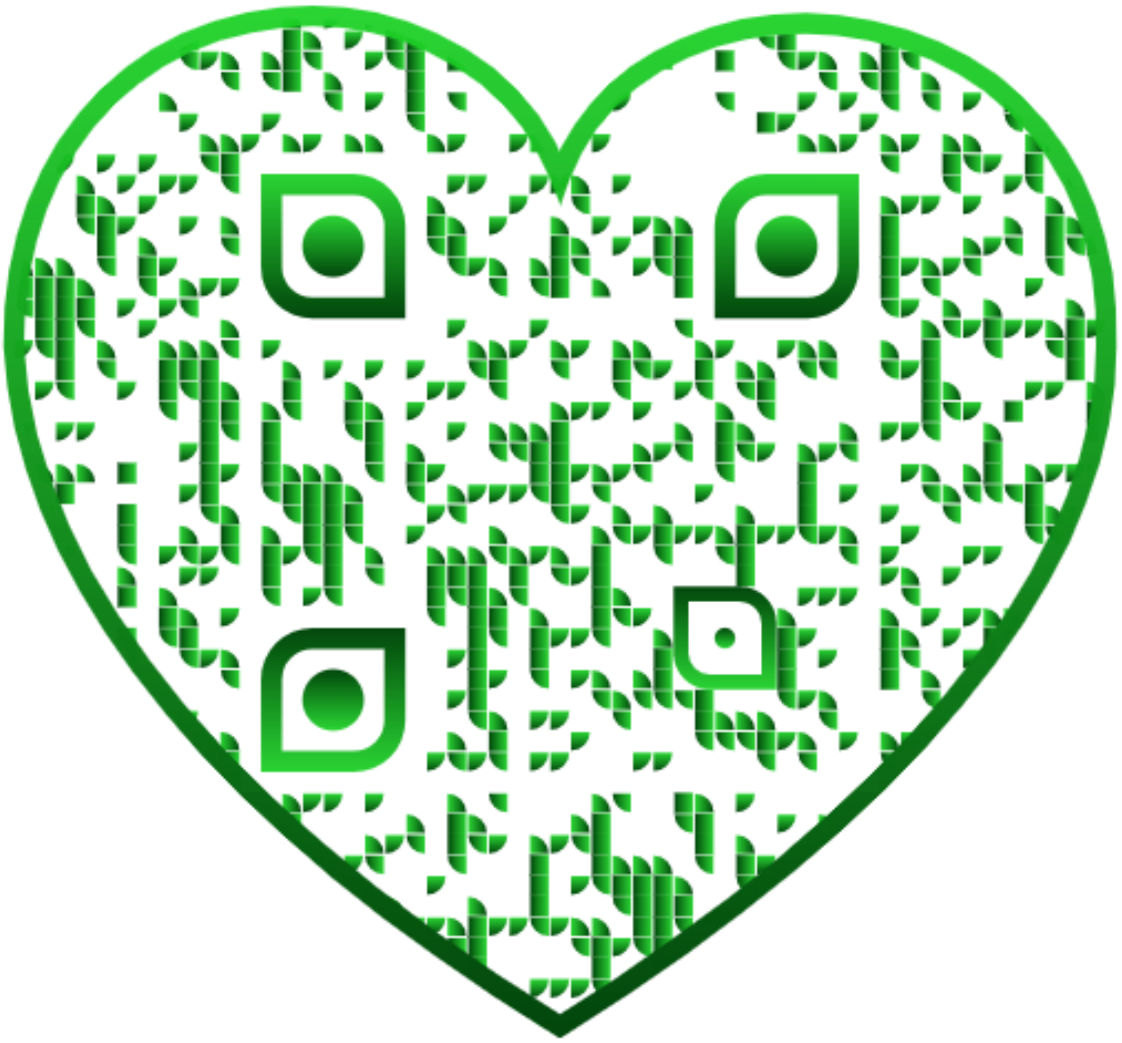
6. 'Even a mind that knows the path can be dragged from the path; the senses are so unruly. But one who is wise controls the senses; the person recollects the mind and fixes it on Me. I call such a person illumined.'As long as one expects happiness, one stays restless. But the enlightened soul 'knows bliss in the Atman [the Self within] and wants nothing else. Cravings torment the heart; he renounces cravings. I call such a person illumined.' Craving for happiness brings suffering in its wake.

7. The illumined soul keeps himself detached from the mind and intellect and directs them to work, whereas the ordinary person identifies himself with the mind and intellect.

8. June 11, 1915. It was noontime. Swami Turiyananda observed: "Is it easy to guard the mind from distracting thoughts? It demands heroic effort. Distractions constantly try to enter your mind and to take possession of you. Layers upon layers of rubbish are in the mind. What good is it merely to close eyes and ears?"

9. Swami Turiyananda was lying down and I [Swami Raghavananda] was fanning him. Swami said: "Never let egotism control you. It ruins a man. He loses all discrimination—just like a drunkard. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'Water does not accumulate on high ground.' An egotistic man holds his head high." Swami Turiyananda lifted his head to illustrate.Swami continued: "Strong is the person who is elastic like steel and does not break. Strong is the person who can live in harmony with many people and heed opinions differing from their own."

10. SWAMI TURIYANANDA: Who wants God? Practically nobody. Everyone wishes to be free from suffering and to find happiness. Pure devotion without any ulterior motive is very rare."I knew a



man who used to say he wanted nirvana. One day he asked me if he should marry again. You see, when there is an earnest longing for nirvana, even to be the emperor of emperors is a trifling thing. The very desire for nirvana brings such tranquillity to the mind. How can anybody then think of marriage!"

11. Sri Ramakrishna did not have much regard for people who were immersed in sex. He used to say that they had lost all substance.The Master used to keep everything in his room in perfect order. Every object had its proper place so that even in darkness he could find what he wanted. An orderly mind is as necessary as external order.

12. July 5, 1915. SWAMI TURIYANANDA: "Repression is bad. Let the mind wander wherever it pleases. Let it experience. At long last it will tire and return to God. If you repress it, its cravings will grow strong. But keep watch over your mind and intellect. Try to unite them with the Lord." DISCIPLE: "Why doesn't the mind have a natural tendency toward the divine?" SWAMI TURIYANANDA: "Everybody wants this to happen spontaneously. The mind will long for God in time. But first struggle; be watchful. Later on your mind will become your guru.

13. "That which is good and pure in you is God. That which is evil in you is your ego. The more you think of him, the more he will increase and you will decrease. Some people are secretive. They raise a wall around themselves. That is bad. Without being sincere and open-hearted nobody can find God."

14. July 6, 1915. It was morning. A devotee had written a letter asking the following question: "Is it possible for a person in the world to attain samadhi?" SWAMI TURIYANANDA: "The worldly man engages himself in sexual intercourse. That, indeed, is his bliss of samadhi! If he doesn't, his wife thinks she is losing her husband. Such is the world! She will beat the children and go around with a long face. Seeing all this disturbance, what can the poor man do? "What a troublesome world this is! How sex creates one bondage after another! But again, there are women who are aids to their husbands' spiritual progress. Such women are born as parts of the Divine Mother. There are spiritual families in this world although they are very rare—the family of Balaram Bose, for instance. Every one of his people is conscious that God comes first."

15. What is worldly life? To be attached to the world and its objects. Spiritual life in the world means keeping the mind in God and performing one's duties without attachment."

16. July 7, 1915. SWAMI TURIYANANDA: " 'He is the doer, I am His instrument.' The more you become established in this idea and renounce the thought of 'me' and 'mine,' the greater will be your attainment of peace."

17. There must be self-effort. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'Struggle a little! Then the guru will help you further.' From our own experience we can confirm that if you move one step toward God, he will take ten steps toward you.

18. DISCIPLE: "But if the Master wished, couldn't he transform and elevate anyone's consciousness?" SWAMI TURIYANANDA: "Yes, he could, but only of those who had some substance in them. The Master used to say about some people, 'They won't achieve much in this life.' Unless there is self-effort, nothing can be accomplished. The illumined souls show us the path. Isn't that a great help? But we have to walk it. If you open your hearts to us we can show you the path, because we have walked the path."

19. DISCIPLE: "We don't understand our own minds." SWAMI TURIYANANDA: "We can help you there. But you must have the desire to control your minds." "Once a king came to a holy man and said: 'Holy sir, please help me control my mind. I am so immersed in worldliness!' The holy man replied: 'Know this world to be ephemeral. See its worthlessness, and your mind will become detached from it.' Then the holy man held on to a pillar and asked the king to release him. The king answered: 'Why don't you just let it go?' Then he understood." "The plate of food is set before you,

but you keep your mouth closed. Do we have to force the food down your throats? This lethargy is a disease of the mind! You may ask, ‘Does not the Lord do everything for his devotee?’ The point is, first become a devotee, then he will do everything for you. But devotion is not to be had so easily. You have to surrender yourself completely to him. If you can’t do that, weep before him and say, ‘Lord, I have no devotion. I have not found you.’ People shed jugfuls of tears for riches. Learn to weep for him! Unless you do, why should God do anything for you? He does not care if you don’t care. If you can feel restless for God, know that he is very near. Then you don’t have to wait long for his vision. Analyze your mind! Find out if you really want him!”

20. Repression of passions is bad. Unless the mind is directed toward a high ideal, they will find expression through other channels. Place your mind in God, then all evil will fall away by itself. That is what is meant by self-control; it arises from devotion to the Lord. Feel that you are a child of God! Why should his child be lustful? Or take the attitude: ‘I am pure! I am awakened! I am free!

21. SWAMI TURIYANANDA: “Mind, intellect, and ego are in flux. One must learn to transcend them. Go beyond, and live as the witness! In the relative plane, one who has knowledge also has ignorance, one who is good also is evil. One must transcend both ignorance and knowledge.”

22. The mind that becomes elated also is subject to depression. Don’t identify yourself with either! Go beyond! In the game of hide-and-seek the children are ‘safe’ when they touch the granny. Touch the granny—that is to say, somehow touch the feet of the Lord. Then you are no longer subject to the opposites of life

23. You have to transcend both good and evil. However pure the mind becomes, you are not safe until you have transcended the mind itself. The sword must touch the touchstone before it turns into gold. Know that your true nature is beyond both good and evil.

24. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: ‘Lust and greed are at the root of worldliness.’

25. Remember how Sri Ramakrishna took a rupee in one hand and mud in the other, and then threw both away! Isn’t that a unique example? Think of the effect! The action immediately created a permanent impression in his mind. He was not satisfied with practicing discrimination only mentally.

26. First detach yourselves completely from all worldly things. A piece of gold remains gold, whether it lies in mud or anywhere else. Similarly, once you have realized God, it does not matter where you live. But if anybody claims that one can be transformed without total renunciation, that person is a liar. ‘By renunciation alone one attains immortality.’ Know this: ‘You cannot find the All unless you give up all.’ With firm determination, like Nachiketa, you have to face death itself.”

27. Give up the idea that you are a man or a woman. Think of yourself as the Atman [God immanent]. While I was in the West, the idea of sex was completely erased from my mind. I did not see any difference between men and women.

28. This world is a slippery place. Unless one is careful one is apt to fall. If you control the tongue and the sexual instinct, you will live happily wherever you may be. How often one sees that people cannot live together in peace! They speak ill of one another or quarrel. And how many control the sex instinct?

29. Remember, you cannot really do the Lord’s work unless you control your senses.

30. The more dispassionate you become, the happier your life will be. That is to say, with dispassion comes immediate peace. Cravings only lead you to sorrow and misery.

31. Keep holy company! It does not matter if you get specific instructions or not. A casual remark from the lips of a holy man can drive away your ignorance.

32. What is meditation? It is to erase all cravings from the heart. Generally, people seek their own advantage—what they can get out of life. To renounce that is liberation.

33. A real scholar is he who has all kinds of information but interprets his knowledge in a new light. He has an opinion of his own.

34. Sattvic people are above thoughts of advantage and disadvantage. They keep their equanimity in the midst of happiness and sorrow.
35. DISCIPLE: “Sir, isn’t realization the supreme goal? Is there anything beyond it? You seem to make a difference between realization and your state of attainment.” SWAMI TURIYANANDA: “Yes, there is a difference. There are degrees of realization. A rose is a rose, but there are four-petaled and hundred-petaled roses. Is there no difference? Swamiji gave us a higher ideal than realization for oneself; it is to expand the consciousness until you see yourself in all beings, and all beings in yourself.”
36. SWAMI TURIYANANDA: “Continence is the essence of spiritual life. ‘Of all austerities, the practice of continence is supreme. He who practices it is verily a god, not a man.’ The illumined knowledge of Brahman comes naturally to a person who practices continence for thirty-two years. He who wastes this energy falls from the spiritual path and becomes dissipated.”
37. The control of the passions is a necessary practice of austerity, but genuine control does not come until one has the knowledge of God. When one has attained union with Him, the mind no longer runs after flesh; the craving has completely disappeared. ‘The abstinent run away from what they desire. They carry their desires with them. When a person enters Reality, that person leaves desires behind them.’
38. All people are slaves to nature. Some have a natural tendency toward inertia, others toward activity. Nature makes us helpless, and helplessly under her rule we sometimes act, sometimes become silent and lazy, and sometimes go to sleep. Nature controls us instead of our controlling nature. It is just as if a minister had usurped the king’s throne. I used to weep and pray that I would not remain under the control of nature. First be a witness to the workings of nature. Then try to realize the Reality that is beyond nature.
39. Sri Ramakrishna used to pray: ‘Mother, may these children of mine surpass me in spirituality.’ There is a saying: ‘Welcome defeat at the hands of the son or disciple.
40. What is samadhi? It is to raise the vital energy [prana] upward.